

rain corroboree

Easter, 14-17 April, 2006

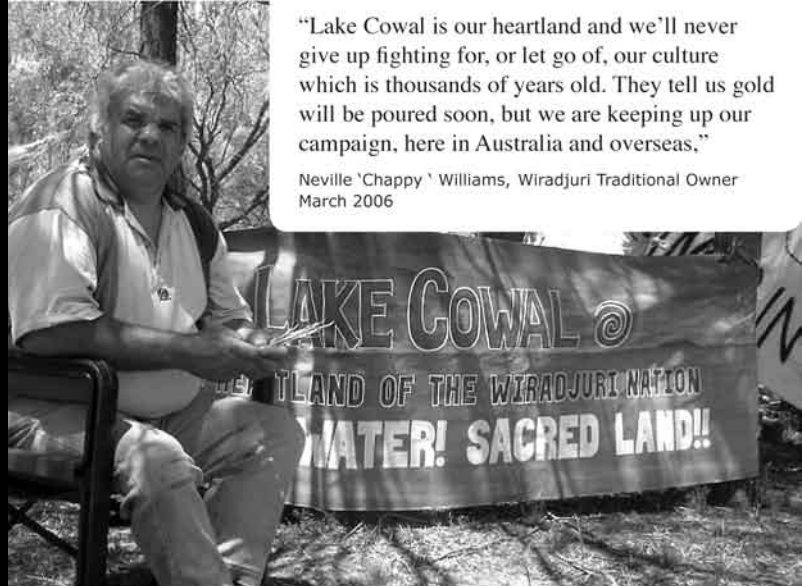




**SACRED HEARTLAND OF
THE WIRADJURI NATION**

END THE CYANIDE GENOCIDE

WATER IS MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD



"Lake Cowal is our heartland and we'll never give up fighting for, or let go of, our culture which is thousands of years old. They tell us gold will be poured soon, but we are keeping up our campaign, here in Australia and overseas."

Neville 'Chappy' Williams, Wiradjuri Traditional Owner
March 2006

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LAKE COWAL



OVERVIEW

Lake Cowal is 'the Sacred Heartland of the Wiradjuri Nation' and is a wetland of national and international significance. Lake Cowal is listed on the Register of the National Estate and the Directory of Important Wetlands and is home to precious birds and other species,

Since 1997 the campaign to stop the gold mine at Lake Cowal has focused on the cultural and ecological significance of the area. The mine is due to be fully operational by 27 March 2006 despite opposition from traditional owners within the Wiradjuri Nation and many environmental and human rights groups.

This contentious gold mine is owned and operated by the world's largest gold mining company, Barrick Gold. There are pending court cases regarding the legitimacy of the gold mine, clear breaches in environmental safety standards and the unwillingness of the NSW state government to release the cyanide transportation route. Over 6,000 of tonnes of cyanide per year will be trucked from the Orica manufacturing plant in Gladstone in Queensland 1600 km north of Lake Cowal.

Non Indigenous supporters acknowledge the Wiradjuri Nation, Traditional Owners of the Lake Cowal area and the fact that Indigenous land has never been ceded.

"The construction of the mine has already desecrated this sacred place, even before gold is poured. According to our Old People, the gold that is about to be ripped out of the ground is the blood of Biame, the Creator.

When gold is taken out of the land, the balance of Nature and of the Spirit is changed, affecting the weather, wildlife and people.

Native wildlife deaths have already been reported at the mine site. Eighty per cent of mined gold is used for jewellery. How many people, animals and birds will have to be sacrificed for greed?

- Neville Williams, Wiradjuri Traditional Elder, March 2006

INDIGENOUS

Barrick Gold and their predecessors have not properly consulted with Aboriginal traditional owners from the region, many of whom have declared their opposition to the Lake Cowal gold mine project.

'Wiradjuri Lore and culture passes on traditional knowledge of the importance of the lake for the synergy between humanity and spirituality in the process of regeneration.'

Sites have been dated in the area that are between 2000 and 4000 years old. Many of the Lake Cowal artifacts are at

least as old as the Pyramids of Egypt, yet 'Consent to Destroy' permits have been granted to Barrick and Country Energy (for the construction of an Electricity Transmission Line to the Lake). These permits have been granted by National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Wiradjuri Traditional Elder Neville 'Chappy' Williams with the ongoing support of the Indigenous Justice Advocacy Network continue to fight Barrick in the courts for the fifth year running.

RESOLUTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS WITHIN THE MURRAY DARLING BASIN:

We, the Elders and Traditional Owners representing the sovereign Aboriginal nations within the Murray Darling Basin are in total opposition to the proposed Canadian Barrick goldmine within Lake Cowal, the sacred heartland of Wiradjuri.

We demand that the Federal and New South Wales State Governments intervene to halt the cyanide leach goldmine proposed for Lake Cowal, before there is any more desecration of Wiradjuri's sacred heartland and a potential environmental disaster.

We oppose the danger of transporting 6000 tonnes a year of lethal cyanide from Gladstone, Queensland, across our river catchments into the Lake Cowal and Kalara (Lachlan) River floodplain to leach the gold. The cyanide tailings dams are two square kilometres in area and an environmental disaster from a potential cyanide leak threatens rivers and ground waters in the Murray Darling Basin from Condobolin to Adelaide.

We oppose the planned gold mine which would expose 204 million tonnes of waste rock to air releasing arsenic, a heavy metal poison, which accumulates in living tissue and is concentrated by the food chain. The arsenic would be washed into the lake and rivers after rain.

We condemn the allocation to the mining company of 16 Megalitres (16 million litres) a day of precious and sacred water from the underground river east of Lake Cowal and part of the Kalara (Lachlan) river system

We support the Mooka and Kalara united families within the Wiradjuri nation in their lead in the opposition to the goldmine and to any 'Consent to Destroy' of living sites and cultural heritage. We call on all people to support us in our fight to protect Lake Cowal in the heart of the living Murray Darling Basin.

Resolved on 21 May 2004 in old Parliament House, Canberra

WATER

IS LIFE



Lake Cowal is a wetland of national and international significance. Situated in central western New South Wales, Lake Cowal is home to many precious birds and other native species. The Australian Heritage Commission has suggested the NSW government consider the Lake Cowal region for listing under the Ramsar Convention as a Wetland of International Importance.

Damage to water and water resources is the worst environmental consequence of gold mining. Water systems around mines are contaminated by cyanide and other process chemicals, and the acid mine drainage that runs off exposed rock. At Lake Cowal the tailings ponds to hold the waste cyanide are unlined and there is grave concern that the cyanide will leach into and pollute the Lachlan River and the ground waters. Central NSW is a drought affected area yet the mine will pump out of the pit up to 17 megalitres (equivalent to 17 Olympic swimming pools) of water per day.

photos: www.ecopix.net
More photos can be seen at:
<http://www.rainforestinfo.org.au/gold>

*What's a definition of a gold mine?
A hole in the ground owned by a liar.*

- MARK TWAIN



GOLDMINE

This contentious gold mine is owned and operated by the world's largest gold mining company, Barrick Gold. Besides its interests in Canada, Barrick Gold Corporation operates mines and development projects in the United States, Russia, Peru, Tanzania, Chile, Indonesia, Zaire, Argentina, and Australia.

The area of the lease is 2636 hectares, and is adjacent to the lake. About 208 million tonnes of waste rock including the low to medium grade ore will be excavated from the open-cut pit, which is 1 kilometre long, 825 metres wide and 325 metres deep, taking part of the western side of the lake and partly within the high water level. It is estimated that the pit Barrick wants to blast to retrieve approximately 2.7 million ounces of gold will be comparable to the size of Uluru in the Northern Territory.

The above images were taken in mid March a couple of weeks before the mine started full operations. The picture on the far right reveals that the tailings dams are unlined.

CYANIDE

Cyanide is the most popular chemical used by mining corporations to extract gold from ore. Cyanide is the chemical-of-choice for mining companies to extract gold from crushed ore, despite the fact that leaks or spills of this chemical are extremely toxic to fish, plant life and human beings. Very low grade ore, with minimal residues of gold, is crushed and piled on the ground, then sprayed with a cyanide solution. No mine has ever avoided leaking cyanide-laced water and waste into the ecosystem.

At Corroboree for RAIN this Easter 2006, Cyanide Watch will launch from the gates of the mine. 'Cyanide Watch is a direct action campaign to bear witness to the cyanide crimes of the gold mining industry. Cyanide Watch will commence a series of roadside actions to bear witness to the hazards of the transport of bulk sodium cyanide through the towns and communities between where it is made and where it is used to extract gold and leave huge artificial lakes of permanently poisoned water.' - www.peacebus.com



LINKS

www.rainforestinfo.org.au/gold/lakep.html
www.foe.org.au/nc/savelakecowal.htm
www.savelakecowal.org
www.peacebus.com/

Overview

www.savelakecowal.org
www.rainforestinfo.org.au/gold/lakep
www.peacebus.com/LakeCowl/

Barrick

www.savelakecowal.org/Barrick.html
www.savelakecowal.org/the_company.html
www.savelakecowal.org/the_project.html
www.rainforestinfo.org.au/gold/barrick.html

Indigenous

www.savelakecowal.org/Indigenous.html
www.rainforestinfo.org.au/gold/lakep

Legal

www.savelakecowal.org/legal.html

JOIN the savelakecowal e-group
savelakecowal-subscribe@yahoo.com

JOIN the cyanidewatch e-group
cyanide_watch-subscribe@lists.riseup.net

Coalition to Protect Lake Cowl

www.rainforestinfo.org.au/gold/lakep.html#Coalition

Lake Cowl Action Alert:

www.rainforestinfo.org.au/gold/lakec.html

Recent Aerial Photos of the mine:

www.peacebus.com/LakeCowl/060309MinePics.html

Desecration of Sacred Site - Lake Cowl

<http://melbourne.indymedia.org/news/2006/03/108897.php>

Corroborree at Lake Cowl - RAIN

<http://melbourne.indymedia.org/news/2006/03/108901.php>

Lake Cowl National Day of Action, 22 March 2006

<http://www.peacebus.com/CyanideWatch/060328NDAAwater.html>
<http://perth.indymedia.org/index.php?action=default&featureview=342>

Environmental

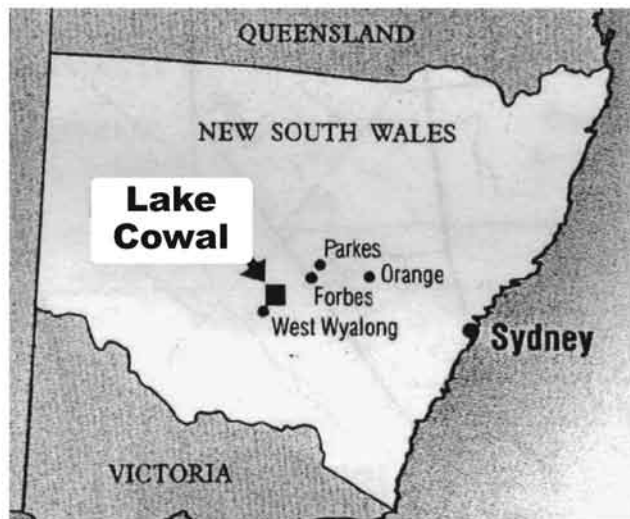
www.coi.nsw.gov.au/inquiry/69/6.pdf
www.rainforestinfo.org.au/gold/lakep
www.savelakecowal.org/environmental.html
www.savelakecowal.org/water.html
www.savelakecowal.org/flora_fauna.html

Cyanide

www.rainforestinfo.org.au/gold/cyanide.htm
www.savelakecowal.org/cyanide.html
www.peacebus.com/CyanideWatch/

Campaign Actions and Events

www.savelakecowal.org/actions.html
www.savelakecowal.org/events.html
www.savelakecowal.org/photos_media.html
www.rainforestinfo.org.au/gold/gather.html
www.rainforestinfo.org.au/gold/corr_06.html



how to get there

Supporters of the protection of Lake Cowl will be travelling from around the country to corroborree. To see your local contact go to:

http://www.rainforestinfo.org.au/gold/corr_06.html

or contact: 0431 194 083

waysofseeing@westnet.com.au

For maps and distances from each city go to:

<http://www.savelakecowal.org/location.html>



food•water•camping

Participants will need to provide their own food. There will be a kitchen running over the weekend with soup, rice and dahl. However you will need to bring your own supplies. We suggest that participants bring along dried/dehydrated food (camping supplies, space food, rice, lentils, etc.) rather than canned or fresh food. Participants should plan what they are going to eat ahead of time and bring it along. Please try to bring along minimal canned food, due to a) weight considerations and b) waste disposal considerations. Be prepared to take the empties back with you, of course).

Although there will be a water supply available, participants are asked to bring along their own filled water containers (about 5 litres or more). Remember that although water will be provided, you must have your own containers to collect and hold water for personal use. It is a 50km drive to refill the water containers each day.

Participants should be prepared to wash themselves via sponge bath (ie wiping yourself down with a damp cloth from a bucket) & to use minimal water for such things as brushing their teeth & washing dishes etc. DO NOT drink or otherwise consume ANY water that you are not sure of. We will be camping. So bring appropriate equipment. (see Checklist)



climate•checklist

The climate in April at Lake Cowal is usually warm and sunny with an average temperature that can range from 15-30 degrees. this climate should mean summer clothes for the day and something warm for the nights. there will be no water for clothes washing so bring enough clothes for 3 days.

Everyone can make their own arrangements. However, here is a checklist of things you will need or might wish to take:

- Torch or light source
- Tent/shelter/tarp
- Sleeping bag/undersheet
- Pillow/cushion
- Soap/Towel/Toothbrush/paste
- Bring suitable clothes for the environment
- Sensible closed toed shoes
- Water- or alcohol-based sunscreen
- Band-aids/disinfectant/basic first aid kit
- Toilet paper
- Protection from sun ie. hat, sunglasses, long sleeves
- Insect repellent
- Camera/film/batteries
- Plate/bowl/cutlery
- Matches
- Cooking pans
- Cooker/billy
- Gas bottles
- Lots of water in a plastic bottle with squirt top, to drink and to wash off your skin or eyes, if needed
- Identification and/or emergency contact information only if you want to be cited out of jail in the event of arrest
- Enough money for pay-phone, food, transportation

Remember to be SELF-SUFFICIENT!

indigenous solidarity

Lake Cowal Corroboree - RAIN, is a call to action to protect Lake Cowal from cyanide gold mining and to support Wiradjuri people in the ongoing struggle against the 'Midas' greed of dirty gold on their lands and sacred sites. At corroboree we respect both the land and the custodians of the land.

A word for those non indigenous activists reading this guide

If we really believe in social justice, then the fight for justice for Australia's Indigenous peoples should be part of all our activism. It is important that we move beyond recognising prior ownership and on going dispossession (important as it is) to really challenging our own racism(s) and ways of organising. We can begin by listening to Indigenous people, whilst realising that they are not a homogenous group without their own challenges. But also, we need to ask questions - What does solidarity mean to them?, How would they like us to get involved in their campaigns? Perhaps the most important thing is to question ourselves on whether, in our organising, we are just continuing with the same racist assumptions that have underpinned the colonisation process, and act to change this racism in ourselves and in our organisations.



Corroboree at Lake Cowal
Easter weekend, April 2004



Get educated

There are some great websites devoted to indigenous issues that provide suggested off-line reading as well.

Kooriweb

A place in cyberspace for the indigenous peoples of Australia, controlled and operated by indigenous people.

<http://www.kooriweb.org>

Gary Foley's Koori History Webpage

Extensive history, essays and links on Koori history/justice issues put together by Gary Foley - an excellent educational resource

<http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/indexb.html>

Students for Land Justice and Reconciliation

Melbourne University students group in support of Land Rights, Justice and Reconciliation. <http://www.sljr.org>

P.A.R.I.A.H

People against Racism in Aboriginal Homelands

<http://www.freespeech.org/pariah>

Gibsonnet

Contains a vast collection of Indigenous links.

<http://indigenous.gibsonnet.net/links1.htm>

Aboriginal Genocide

A small organisation committed to Aboriginal genocide litigation, we have current and pending cases in the Australian court system. Information regarding these cases is available here:

<http://www.aboriginalgenocide.com.au>

Aboriginal Tent Embassy

Home of the continuing Embassy picket located on the lawns of the old Federal Parliament. A must visit when in Canberra.

toilets

Rudimentary pit toilets are being dug, and volunteers will be required to assist with digging pits etc. Don't forget to bring toilet paper. The medical group will be available to assist but you should bring some basic medical supplies.

health tent

There will be basic first aid available at the Lake Cowal campsite. If you are thinking of doing an action which may be potentially dangerous, we would encourage you to tell someone at the health tent so we can have a first aid team close at hand. If you have first aid training or want to help out logistically through the convergence and festival, come and talk to us and I'm sure we can find something to occupy you.

how do i prepare?

Do you have any Medical conditions?

- Bring your medication.
- Tell a close friend or one of the first-aiders
- Bring a doctors letter in case you are arrested
- Bring an extra script in case you lose your medication
- Be aware of the limits to how far you can go because of your past injuries, this will not be your last action so think for the future

drugs+alcohol

When involved in direct action it's important to be able to make decisions and maintain a sense of clarity. It's also important to remember that the actions we take affect each other. If you are going to take drugs make sure you do it safely. also remember we'll be under close surveillance by the cops and they will itch for any chance to arrest people. The convergence is also about working with Uncle Chappy to set up a cultural camp so respect the land you are on and the people around you.



legal

- taken from Fitzroy Legal Service
Activist Rights Guide :: www.activistrights.org.au

Our rights

Our rights to protest, demonstrate and take part in political activities are recognised by the International Declaration of Human Rights (1948) as well as International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and other covenants. In Australia, these international human rights are seldom enforceable in the face of the state. We do have these rights and we can assert them as citizens and activists, but we shouldn't expect them to be respected without question.

Being arrested

Police are not required to give you a warning prior to arresting you, but sometimes they will. Police must formally tell you they are arresting you. Usually, the police will also touch you on the arm or shoulder to arrest you. However, should you (the arrestee) submit to the authority of the arrestor (the police), words alone can be sufficient for an arrest. You should always ask the police officer; "Am I under arrest?" and "What for?". Remember what they say. In most cases, it is necessary for police to inform you of the reason for the arrest.

For more detailed information go to www.activistrights.org.au



DON'T POISON THE LAND!



PROTECT LAKE COWAL

WATER IS MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD

precious water, sacred land



stop the cyanide genocide

www.rainforestinfo.org.au/gold/lakep.html

www.foe.org.au/nc/savelakecowal.htm

www.savelakecowal.org

www.peacebus.com

JOIN the savelakecowal e-group
savelakecowal-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

JOIN the cyanidewatch e-group
cyanide_watch-subscribe@lists.riseup.net



lake cowal corroboree

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FOR INFO:

E: natalie.lowrey@foe.org.au

M: 0431 194 083

www.rainforestinfo.org.au/gold/corr_06.html

www.savelakecowal.org

www.peacebus.com

www.foe.org.au

MOOKA & KALARA UNITED FAMILIES



**Friends of
the Earth**

The **Rainforest** Information Centre